

Message Text

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FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO ONLY FROM TOON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR UR IS

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ISRAELI-SOVIET TALKS

1. AFTER OUR DISCUSSION OF THE ISRAELI CARGO PROBLEM AT HIS KIBBUTZ VILLA ON THE SEA OF GALILEE EARLIER THIS WEEK, FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON SAID THAT HE WISHED TO RAISE WITH ME COMPLETELY INFORMALLY A QUESTION RELATED TO ISRAELI-SOVIET RELATIONS. HE SAID HE WANTED MY ADVISE AS A "SOVIET EXPERT."

2. ALLON SAID THAT, AS I MUST BE AWARE, GROMYKO HAD A BRIEF EXCHANGE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER EBAN AT THE GENEVA MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE IN 1973 IN WHICH THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER HAD SAID THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO HAVE A FURTHER EXCHANGE ON A COMPLETELY INFORMAL BASIS AT SOME FUTURE INTERNATIONAL GATHERING. THERE HAD BEEN NO ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS BY THE ISRAELIS. ALLON WONDERED IF DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR HIM TO PASS WORD THROUGH HERZOG TO MALIK THAT HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN MEETING WITH GROMYKO IF THE IDEA APPEALED TO THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER. ALLON WOULD APPRECIATE MY ADVISE ON WHETHER THIS WOULD BE A SENSIBLE WAY TO PROCEED.

3. I TOLD ALLON THAT I WOULD NOT MAKE THIS APPROACH IF I WERE HE SINCE I WAS REASONABLY SURE THAT HE WOULD SIMPLY INVITE A SOVIET REBUFF. I FELT STRONGLY THAT IF THE SOVIETS WERE INTERESTED IN TALKING

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TO THE ISRAELIS THEY WOULD PASS THE WORD IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE MESSAGE WOULD COME THRU LOUD AND CLEAR. IF THE ISRAELIS WERE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN SOUNDING OUT THE SOVIETS, A BETTER APPROACH WOULD BE TO HAVE AN OFFICIAL OF OUR DELEGATION QUIETLY ASCERTAIN FROM A MEDIUM-LEVEL SOVIET OFFICIAL IF THERE WOULD BE ANY INTEREST ON THE SOVIET PART IN A MEETING WITH THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER.

4. ALLON SAID THAT HE FELT I WAS RIGHT; HE WOULD THINK ABOUT THE MATTER, AND IF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WISHED TO PROCEED ALONG THE LINES OF MY SUGGESTION, HE WOULD LET ME KNOW.

5. YOU MAY WISH TO INFORM THE SECRETARY OF THIS EXCHANGE.
TOON

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